DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 417 580 EF 005 037

TITLE	School Safety Audit: Protocol, Procedures, and Checklists.
INSTITUTION	Virginia State Dept. of Education, Richmond.
PUB DATE	1997-09-00
NOTE	29p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Virginia State Dept. of Education, P.O. Box 2120, Richmond, VA 23218.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Audits (Verification); Board of Education Policy; Educational Diagnosis; *Educational Facilities Improvement; Educational Legislation; Elementary Secondary Education; Environmental Standards; *Public Schools; School Community Relationship; School Maintenance; *School Safety; School Security
IDENTIFIERS	*Virginia

ABSTRACT

The 1997 Virginia General Assembly passed HB 1851, which directs local school boards to require all schools under their supervisory control to conduct school safety audits. This type of audit should "assess the safety conditions in each public school." HB 1851 also directed the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop a list of items to be reviewed and evaluated in the school safety audits. This document explains audit protocol, including deadlines and certification procedures, and gives a short description of the audit procedure. The main portion of the document is a collection of checklists, one for each of the following components: (1) safety and security of buildings and grounds; (2) development and enforcement of policies; (3) procedures for data collection; (4) intervention and prevention plans; (5) staff development; (6) opportunities for student involvement; (7) level of parent and community involvement; (8) role of law enforcement; (9) development of a crisis management plan; and (10) standards for security personnel. Attachment 1 is a copy of HB 1851 and Attachment 2 is a blank copy of the School Safety Audit Certification. (Author/BRH)

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School Safety Audit

Protocol, Procedures, and Checklists

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September 1997

Virginia Department of Education

EF 005 037

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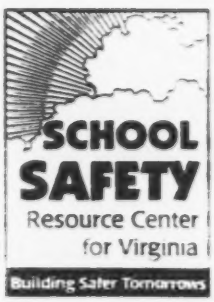

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SCHOOL SAFETY AUDIT GUIDELINES

DESCRIPTIVE STATEMENT

The 1997 Virginia General Assembly passed HB 1851 that directs local school boards to require all schools under their supervisory control to conduct school safety audits. (See Attachment I.) This audit should "assess the safety conditions in each public school to (i) identify and, if necessary, develop solutions for physical safety concerns, including building security issues, and (ii) identify and evaluate any patterns of student safety concerns occurring on school property or at school-sponsored events."

HB 1851 also directed the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop a list of items to be reviewed and evaluated in the school safety audits. As a result, the Department of Education has developed checklists to be used as guidelines for the audit process.

COMPONENTS OF THE AUDIT PROCESS

School safety encompasses multiple domains within the school environment that must be reviewed altogether when assessing the level of safety for students and staff. The ten minimum components of the audit process that should be assessed are:

- Safety and Security of Buildings and Grounds
- Development and Enforcement of Policies
- Procedures for Data Collection
- Development of Intervention and Prevention Plans
- Level of Staff Development
- Opportunities for Student Involvement
- Level of Parent and Community Involvement
- Role of Law Enforcement
- Development of Crisis Management Plans
- Standards for Safety and Security Personnel

School safety is the responsibility of everyone--staff, students, parents, and the community. An audit is one tool that, if used effectively, can provide a snapshot of the school's level of safety and identify those areas that need improvement. This proactive process will help ensure that students can maximize their learning potential within a safe and secure environment.

AUDIT PROTOCOL

- **How often should a safety audit be conducted?**

  A complete safety audit should be conducted every three years. A review of the identified implementation and improvements noted in the complete audit should be conducted annually.

- **If a school has conducted an independent audit prior to July 1, 1997, does this meet the requirements of HB 1851?**

  Yes. Schools that have conducted an audit prior to July 1, 1997, but within the academic year September, 1996-September, 1997, will be exempt from conducting an audit until academic year 1999-2000. In such instances, the division Superintendent will complete the attached certification form (see Attachment II) and submit to the Department of Education no later than January 15, 1998.

- **If a school has <u>not</u> conducted an audit prior to July 1, 1997, how soon must the audit be completed?**

  A school safety audit is a site-based activity that provides valuable information to the administration regarding the safety and security of all students and staff. Therefore, it is advisable that every school within a division complete its safety audit during 1997-98, insofar as possible.

- **Are schools required to submit certification of audit completion?**

  The division Superintendent will complete the certification form included in this package (see Attachment II) following completion of the safety audit and submit to the Department of Education no later than June 1, 1997, for academic year 1997-98.

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AUDIT PROCEDURE

A. Preparation and Planning

It is recommended that a team be established to conduct the school safety audit. Each team should be comprised of at least three, but not more than five, people representing a variety of stakeholders. These should include, but not be limited to, the central office administration, teachers, parents, and law enforcement personnel. To ensure neutrality and objectivity, it is recommended that team members should not audit their own facility. For example, the audit team in School A should audit School B, and vice-versa.

Audits may also be conducted by qualified, private organizations outside the school system. Technical assistance is also available from the Department of Education.

Audit Team members should review the following documents and materials, preferably in advance of the on-site visit:

- Student Conduct Policy
- Data on Student Discipline Referrals
- Criminal Data (reported by the school and by the surrounding community)
- Blueprint of the school
- Crisis Management Plan

B. On-site Visit

The Audit Team should schedule an on-site visit with the building principal 2-3 weeks prior to the visit. Approximately one day should be allotted to conduct the visit. This will include informal interviews with administrators and randomly-selected staff, students, and if available, the School Resource Officer and Security Officers, to determine the perceived level of safety among all stakeholders.

During the on-site visit, team members should follow the checklists to ensure that all components of school safety are addressed.

C. Follow-up

Following the visit, the Audit Team should prepare a written report of the findings to be submitted to the principal, the Superintendent, and the school board within three weeks of the visit. The report should include (minimally) both commendations and recommendations.

The Division Superintendent should submit the School Safety Audit Certification (see Attachment II) to the Department of Education within 30 days of the on-site visit.

D. Additional Considerations

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED): The Department of Criminal Justice Services has a CPTED CD-ROM available for distribution, free of charge. CPTED is an innovative crime control strategy that can help schools and law enforcement identify and deal with criminal activity. Schools are encouraged to use this tool to provide training for their staff.

Local Emergency Management Services: Schools can benefit greatly from close collaboration with their local EMS. Schools are encouraged to establish with EMS a common emergency response method, or Incident Command System (ICS), and to provide training for school staff.

CHECKLIST FOR THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

DIRECTIONS: Use the following checklist to assess the school's strengths and weaknesses related to safety and security of buildings and grounds. An element may be in place (check YES) but at a minimal level (check IMPROVE). If the element is missing, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing criteria or function, check IMPLEMENT.

SAFETY AND SECURITY OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
SCHOOL EXTERIOR AND PLAY AREAS				
School grounds are fenced. If yes, approximate height _____				
Gates are secured by good padlock and chains after hours.				
Drug-free zone signs are posted.				
Signs are posted for visitors to report to main office through a designated entrance.				
Shrubs and foliage are trimmed to allow for good line of sight. (3'-0"/8'-0" rule)				
All poisonous shrubs, trees, and foliage have been removed.				
Boundary edges are free from trees and telephone poles.				
Bus loading and drop-off zones are clearly defined.				
Access to bus loading area is restricted to other vehicles during loading/unloading.				
Staff are assigned to bus loading/drop off areas.				

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SAFETY AND SECURITY OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
Parent drop-off and pick-up area is clearly defined.				
There is adequate lighting around the building.				
Lighting is provided at entrances and other points of possible intrusion.				
The school ground is free from trash or debris.				
The school is free of graffiti.				
Play areas are fenced.				
Good visual surveillance of play equipment is possible.				
Vehicular access to play areas is restricted.				
Playground equipment has tamper-proof fasteners.				
Visual surveillance of bicycle racks is possible.				
Visual surveillance of parking lots from main office is possible.				
Accessible lenses are protected by some unbreakable material.				
All areas of school buildings and grounds are accessible to patrolling security vehicles.				
Driver education vehicles are secure.				
Students are issued parking stickers for assigned parking areas				
Student access to parking area is restricted to arrival and dismissal times.				

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SAFETY AND SECURITY OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
Outside hardware has been removed from all doors except at points of entry.				
Ground floor windows: - no broken panes, - locking hardware in working order				
Basement windows are protected with grill or well cover.				
If campus style, doors are locked when classrooms are vacant.				
There is a central alarm system in the school. If yes, brief description: _____ _____				
High-risk areas (office, cafeteria, computer room, music room, shops, labs) are protected by high security locks and an alarm system.				
Unused areas of the school can be closed off during after school activities.				
There is two-way communication between: Classroom and main office, Duty stations and main office, and Relocatable classrooms and main office.				
Students are restricted from loitering in corridors, hallways, and restrooms.				
"Restricted" areas are properly identified.				
Students are issued I.D. badges.				
There are written regulations restricting student access to school grounds and buildings.				

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SAFETY AND SECURITY OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
Entrances to school property can be observed from the school and are adequately secured after hours.				
Parking area has been designated for students who must leave school during regular hours to begin work.				
SCHOOL INTERIOR				
The entrance lobby is visible from the main office.				
Multiple entries to the building are controlled and supervised.				
Visitors are required to sign in.				
There is only one clearly marked and designated entrance for visitors.				
Proper identification is required of vendors, repairmen.				
Visitors are issued I.D. cards or badges.				
The hallways are properly lighted for safety.				
Bathrooms are properly lighted.				
Bathrooms are supervised by staff.				
The bathroom walls are free of graffiti.				
Doors accessing internal courtyards are securely locked.				
Stairwells are properly lighted.				
Exit signs are clearly visible and pointing in the correct direction.				

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SAFETY AND SECURITY OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
Switches and controls are properly located and protected.				
The possibility of lower energy consumption and high lighting levels with more efficient light sources has been explored.				
Directional lights are aimed at the building.				
Access to electrical panels is restricted.				
Mechanical rooms and other hazardous storage areas are kept locked.				
School files and records are maintained in locked, vandal proof, fireproof containers or vaults.				
The school maintains a record of all maintenance on doors, windows, lockers, or other areas of he school.				
If a classroom is vacant, students are restricted from entering the room alone.				
Friends, relatives or non-custodial parents are required to have written permission to pick up a student from school.				
Students are required to have written permission to leave school during school hours.				
Full and part-time staff including bus drivers are issued I.D. cards or other identification.				
There are written regulations regarding access and control of school personnel using the building after school hours.				
Staff members who remain after school hours are required to sign out.				

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SAFETY AND SECURITY OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
Faculty members are required to lock classrooms upon leaving.				
One person is designated to perform the following security checks at the end of day: - Check that all classrooms and offices are locked, - Check all restrooms, locker rooms to assure that no one is hiding, - Check all exterior entrances to assure that they are locked, - Check all night lights to assure that they have been turned on, and - Check the alarm system to assure that it is functioning properly.				
The telephone numbers of the principal or other designated contact person are provided to the police department so the police can make contact in the event of a suspicious or emergency situation.				
Law enforcement personnel and/or community residents monitor school grounds after school hours.				
All school equipment is permanently marked with an Identification Number.				
An up-tp-date inventory is maintained for all expendable school supplies.				
Secure storage is available during and after school for valuable items.				
There is a policy for handling cash received at the school.				
There is regular maintenance and/or testing of the entire security alarm system at least every six months.				

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SAFETY AND SECURITY OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
MISCELLANEOUS				
There is a schedule for maintenance for checking the following: - lights, - locks/hardware, - storage sheds, portable classrooms				
There is a control system in place to monitor keys and duplicates.				
Exterior light fixtures are securely mounted.				
Mechanical rooms and hazardous storage areas are locked.				
Fire drills are conducted as required by the Code of Virginia (22.1-137)				
A record of health permits is maintained.				
A record of Fire Inspection by the local or state Fire Officer is maintained.				
Where does vandalism, if present, take place? Check all that apply. Classrooms _____ Hallways _____ Toilets _____ Locker rooms _____ Play areas _____ Other _____				
During what period of the day does vandalism occur? Check all that apply Before school _____ After school _____ During school hours _____ Weekends _____				

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SAFETY AND SECURITY OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
If present, where do assault and battery incidents take place? During what period of the day do these incidents happen? Check all that apply. Before school _____ After school _____ Change of class _____ Lunch period _____ Other _____				

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CHECKLIST FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

DIRECTIONS: Use the following checklist to assess the school's strengths and weaknesses related to development and enforcement of policies. An element may be in place (check YES) but at a minimal level (check IMPROVE). If the element is missing, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing criteria or function, check IMPLEMENT.

DEVELOPMENT AND ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
The Student Conduct Policy is reviewed and updated annually.				
A visitor policy is in effect, requiring a sign-in procedure for all visitors, including visible identification.				
The school has a Crisis Management Plan in effect that is reviewed and updated annually.				
A chain-of-command has been established for the school when the principal and/or other administrators are away from the building.				
The school has implemented pro-active security measures on campus, at school sponsored activities, and on all school property (i.e., school buses).				
Disciplinary consequences for infractions to the Code of Conduct are fairly and consistently enforced.				
Parents are an integral part of student discipline procedures and actions.				
Alternatives to suspensions and expulsions have been built into the discipline policy and are consistently used.				

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DEVELOPMENT AND ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
Behavioral expectations and consequences for violations are clearly outlined in the Code of Conduct, including sanctions for weapon and drug offenses and all other criminal acts.				
The policy provides a system whereby staff and students may report problems or incidents anonymously.				
Specific policies and/or procedures are in place that detail staff members' responsibilities for monitoring and supervising students outside the classroom, such as in hallways, cafeteria, rest rooms, etc.				

CHECKLIST FOR THE PROCEDURES FOR DATA COLLECTION

DIRECTIONS: Use the following checklist to assess the school's strengths and weaknesses related to procedures for data collection. An element may be in place (check YES) but at a minimal level (check IMPROVE). If the element is missing, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing criteria or function, check IMPLEMENT.

PROCEDURES FOR DATA COLLECTION	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
Violations of state and federal law are reported to law enforcement.				
An incident reporting procedure for disruptive incidents has been established.				
Records or data have been established and are analyzed to identify recurring problems.				
Accident reports are filed when a student is injured on school property or during school-related activities.				
The incident reporting system is reviewed and updated annually.				

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CHECKLIST FOR INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION PLANS

DIRECTIONS: Use the following checklist to assess the school's strengths and weaknesses related to intervention and prevention programs. An element may be in place (check YES) but at a minimal level (check IMPROVE). If the element is missing, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing criteria or function, check IMPLEMENT.

INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION PLANS	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
Students have access to conflict resolution programs.				
Students are assisted in developing anger management skills.				
Diversity awareness is emphasized.				
Programs are available for students who are academically at-risk.				
Students may seek help without the loss of confidentiality.				
Students and parents are aware of community resources.				

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CHECKLIST FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

DIRECTIONS: Use the following checklist to assess the school's strengths and weaknesses related to staff development. An element may be in place (check YES) but at a minimal level (check IMPROVE). If the element is missing, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing criteria or function, check IMPLEMENT.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
The principal and administrative staff maintain a highly visible profile.				
Administrators and staff (including security and law enforcement personnel) are trained in conflict resolution methods.				
Administrators and staff (including security and law enforcement personnel) are trained in implementation of the Crisis Management Plan.				
Administrators and staff are trained in personal safety.				
School security officers (NOT law enforcement) receive inservice training for their responsibilities.				
School Resource Officers (law enforcement) receive inservice training for their responsibilities.				
School volunteers receive training to perform their duties.				
Teachers and staff are made aware of their legal responsibilities for the enforcement of safety rules, policies, and state and federal laws.				

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
School safety and violence prevention information is regularly provided as part of a school or system-wide staff development plan.				
Staff development opportunities extend to support staff, including cafeteria workers, custodial staff, secretarial staff, and bus drivers.				

CHECKLIST FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

DIRECTIONS: Use the following checklist to assess the school's strengths and weaknesses related to opportunities for student involvement. An element may be in place (check YES) but at a minimal level (check IMPROVE). If the element is missing, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing criteria or function, check IMPLEMENT.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT INVOLVEMENT	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
Students are represented on the School Safety Team.				
The school provides opportunities for student leadership related to violence prevention and safety issues.				
The school provides adequate recognition opportunities for all students.				
Students are provided encouragement and support in establishing clubs and programs, etc., with a safety focus.				
Students are adequately instructed in their responsibility to avoid becoming victims of violence (i.e., by avoiding high-risk situations, etc.).				

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CHECKLIST FOR THE LEVEL OF PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

DIRECTIONS: Use the following checklist to assess the school's strengths and weaknesses related to level of parent and community involvement. An element may be in place (check YES) but at a minimal level (check IMPROVE). If the element is missing, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing criteria or function, check IMPLEMENT.

LEVEL OF PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
Evidence suggests that the community supports the school's programs and activities that teach safety and non-violence.				
School activities, services, and curricula reflect the characteristics of the students and the community.				
School safety planning reflects the neighborhood, including crime and hazardous conditions.				
Parents are an integral part of the school's safety planning and policymaking.				
Parents are aware of behavioral expectations and are informed of changes in a timely manner.				
Local businesses and other community groups are involved in the school's safety planning.				

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CHECKLIST FOR THE ROLE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

DIRECTIONS: Use the following checklist to assess the school's strengths and weaknesses related to the role of law enforcement. An element may be in place (check YES) but at a minimal level (check IMPROVE). If the element is missing, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing criteria or function, check IMPLEMENT.

ROLE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
Incidents of crime that occur on school property or at school-related events are reported to law enforcement.				
Law enforcement personnel are an integral part of the school's safety planning process.				
The school has developed an effective partnership with local law enforcement.				
The school and local law enforcement have developed an agreement of understanding, defining the roles and responsibilities of both				
Law enforcement personnel provide a visible presence on campus during school hours and at school-related events				
Local law enforcement provides after hours patrols of the school site				

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CHECKLIST FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

DIRECTIONS: Use the following checklist to assess the school's strengths and weaknesses related to the development of a crisis management plan. An element may be in place (check YES) but at a minimal level (check IMPROVE). If the element is missing, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing criteria or function, check IMPLEMENT.

DEVELOPMENT OF A CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
The school has a Crisis Management Plan.				
The school has established a well-coordinated emergency plan with law enforcement and other crisis response agencies.				
Categories listed in the plan should include, but may not be limited to, the following: Natural Disasters Accidents Acts of Violence Death				

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CHECKLIST FOR STANDARDS FOR SECURITY PERSONNEL

DIRECTIONS: Use the following checklist to assess the school's strengths and weaknesses related to standards for security personnel. An element may be in place (check YES) but at a minimal level (check IMPROVE). If the element is missing, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing criteria or function, check IMPLEMENT.

STANDARDS FOR SECURITY PERSONNEL	YES	NO	IMPLEMENT	IMPROVE
This school does employ security personnel.				
Pre-employment background checks are conducted for security personnel.				
School security personnel meet a standard for training and qualifications comparable to those outlined in §9-183, *Code of Virginia.*				
Security personnel have clearly defined roles and responsibilities.				
Security personnel are involved in the school's safe school planning process.				
Security personnel are knowledgeable about youth service providers, both in and out of the school.				
Security personnel have powers of arrest on school property.				

ATTACHMENT I

CHAPTER 593

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 22.1-278.1, relating to school safety audits.

[H 1851]
Approved March 20, 1997

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 22.1-278.1 as follows:

§22.1-278.1. School safety audits required.

A. For the purposes of this section, "school safety audit" means an assessment of the safety conditions in each public school to (i) identify and, if necessary, develop solutions for physical safety concerns, including building security issues and (ii) identify and evaluate any patterns of student safety concerns occurring on school property or at school-sponsored events. Solutions and responses may include recommendations for structural adjustments, changes in school safety procedures, and revisions to the school board's standards for student conduct.

B. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall develop a list of items to be reviewed and evaluated in the school safety audits required by this section. Each local school board shall require all schools under its supervisory control to conduct school safety audits as defined in this section and consistent with such list.

C. The school board may establish a school safety audit committee to consist of representatives of parents, teachers, local law-enforcement agencies, judicial and public safety personnel, and the community-at-large. The school safety audit committee shall evaluate, in accordance with the directions of the local school board, the safety of each school and submit a plan for improving school safety at a public meeting of the local school board.

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(Attachment II)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL SAFETY AUDIT CERTIFICATION

Division Name: _____

Division Superintendent: _____ Phone: _____

Contact Person (if other than Superintendent) _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Date of Audit Visit: _____

This is to notify the Department of Education that _____ _____ (name of school) has completed the required school safety audit according to HB 1851 and that the recommendations of the audit team will be considered.

_____ _____

Superintendent Signature *DATE*

Please mail or fax to:

Marsha O. Hubbard
VA Department of Education
P. O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218
Fax: (804) 371-8796